

REMARKS

The Examiner has required restriction, as follows:

Group I, claim(s) 170-172, 174-178, and 188-197, drawn to methods for producing an immune response through the administration of a composition comprising a fusion of a hepadnavirus core protein and a heterologous sequence.

Group II, claim(s) 170-172, 174-178, and 188-197, drawn to methods for producing an immune response through the administration of a composition comprising an expression vector encoding a fusion of a hepadnavirus core protein and a heterologous sequence.

For each of Groups I-II, Applicants are additionally required to elect embodiments wherein the hepadnaviral core antigen sequence is from:

- a) a rodent hepadnavirus (claims 170-172, 174, 188, and 190-193, and 196);
- b) an avihepadnavirus (claims 170-172, and 175, 188, 194, and 196); or
- c) a non-human primate hepadnavirus (claims 176-178, 181, 189, 195, and 197).

If Applicants elect (a) above, Applicants are further required to elect one of the specific rodent viruses of claim 190 (also found individually in claims 191-193).

If Applicants elect (b) above, Applicants are further required to elect one of the specific avihepadnaviruses of claim 194.

If Applicants elect (c) above, Applicants are further required to elect one of the specific nonhuman primate viruses of claim 195.

Applicants hereby elect Group I, with rodent hepadnavirus and ground squirrel hepadnavirus as species for initial examination purposes. Claims 170-172, 174, 188, 190, 192 and

196 read upon the elected group and species. Applicants respectfully reserve their right to consideration of claims reading upon additional species in the event that claims reading upon the elected species cores are found to be allowable.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that the amended claims are in condition for allowance. However should the Examiner believe that a telephone interview would aid in the prosecution of this application, Applicants encourage the Examiner to call the undersigned collect.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal form is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. **03-1952** referencing Attorney Docket No. **643802000203**. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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